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Review Article

RASAYANA - A SOLUTION TO MENOPAUSAL SYNDROME

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The growth of a country depends on the population, including both youth and old age, in which 48% of female will suffer from menopausal complications at one point of life. *Acharyas* have mention very few references on *Rajonivritti*. They have mentioned fifty years as the age of *Rajonivritti*. The concept behind the age of *Rajonivritti* is that *Raja* is byproduct of *Rasadhatu* which function better in *Tarunavastha* and its function reduces with age. *Rajonivritti* is a physiological process but when it causes discomfort either to mind or body it attains *Vyadhisvarupa* which may require medical interference. Sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy habits are one of the main causes for metabolic imbalance which leads to *Rajonivruthi Lakshanas* which manifest as *Vyadhi.* **Method**: This article has been made by reviewing various *Samhitas, Nighantus, Sangrahas, Granthas* to attain proper knowledge about the effect of *Rasayana* in improving the quality of life after menopause and in reducing *Rajonivrithi Lakshana.* **Discussion**: *Acharya Sushruta* contributed aging and diseases as the cause for the menopause. According to *Jararog Chikitsasutra - Rasayana* is the only way to combat symptoms associated with *Jara.* **Result**: By definition *Rasayana, 'Labhopayo hi shastanam Rasadinam Rasayanam'.* As menopause is often associated with aging, it is signified by *Dhatu Kshaya* and *Vata* vitiation. *Rasayana* acts on the nutritional dynamics and rejuvenate the body on both physical and mental level. By proper administration of *Rasayana* therapy as preventive tool one can help in reducing the complication in menopause and can improve the quality of life. Hence the importance of *Rasayana* is highlighted here.

INTRODUCTION

"Swabhavath vinashakaarananirapekshad uparamo vinashah swabhavoparamah." ||ch.su.16/27||[1]

Every substance, which is created on this earth, has to be destroyed or degenerated.

Menopause, or *Rajonivrithi*, represents the natural cessation of menstrual cycles and the conclusion of female reproductive capability, but it also brings big changes to a girl's health. This transition, while natural, is often accompanied by a range of physical and emotional symptoms, collectively known as menopausal syndrome.

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According to Ayurveda menopause represents a natural life transition because it recognizes this change as a natural phase in a female's life that needs understanding combined with care management.

Ayurvedic texts, in particular from Acharya Sushruta, Vagbhata, and Bhavamishra, mention precise timelines for menarche and menopause.

They emphasize that *Rajonivrithi* is a regular physiological event, no longer a health disease. However, the transitions leading to menopause (perimenopause) and the section after menopause may additionally have an effect on a female's health inside the long time, including changes in bone density, cardiovascular health, and intellectual properly-being.

Ayurveda addresses those modifications holistically, that specialize in lifestyle, weight-reduction plan, and balancing *Doshas (Vata, Pitta,* and *Kapha)* to ease through this transition for the duration of this phase.

Rajonivriti Vaya

"Rasadeva striyah raktam rajah sanjyam pravarthathe. yaathi panchashatah kshayam|| Su Su 14/6[2]||"

Age of Menopause

The age of menopause is genetically predetermined, typically ranging from 45 to 55 years, with an average onset at 50 years[3].

Nidana* of *Rajonivrithi

In Ayurveda, menopausal symptoms are regarded as "imbalance of the *Dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha*) which occurs as a natural and gradual consequence of aging. Some basic principles must be considered in classifying this condition as a disease as they are not classified separately.

Tadartavam dwadashadurdwam vardhamanashariradhatunam yoshitam kale masi masi pravarthamanam, tasameva panchashatha urdhwam jarapacheeyamanasharira dhatunam kshayam yaathi shanaih ithi sheshah|[4] *|| Su.sha.3/11.Dalhana||*

Panchashathah kshayamityatrapyevameva chintyam| *Arunadatta||*

Considered under *Swabhava Bala Pravritta Vyadhi*. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned a group of naturally occurring diseases under the heading of *Swabhavabala Pravritta* which includes *Kshudha, Pipasa, Nidra, Jara*, and *Mrityu* which occurs during *Jarawastha*.

Other factors related with this are *Kala,Vayu, Karma, Dhatukshaya* and *Abhighata*.[5] *Kala* is a factor responsible for *Kshaya* and *Vriddhi*, as well as it is a cause of *Bala, Taruna* and *Vriddhawastha*. As mentioned earlier, *Jarawastha* is a span of life, which is dominant of *Vata Dosha. Vata Dosha* causes *Kshaya* of all *Dhatu*s.

Menopause is shaped by a variety of factors: genetics, lifestyle and the environment.

- Genetic factors: Research indicates the age when menopause onset occurs is largely determined by genetic predisposition. Women having family history of early menopause are more likely to experience it themselves.
- Lifestyle: Certain lifestyle factors, such as smoking, how active they are and diet may affect when and how severely they experience menopausal symptoms. Studies have found that women who smoke are more likely to enter menopause earlier than non-smoking women.[3]
- Environmental Factors: Pollution and endocrine disrupting substances may play a role in hormonal imbalance and timing of menopause.[6]

Samprapti* of *Rajonivrithi

Dhatu Kshaya due to *kaala, vaya, vridhavastha*

↓

Kshaya of all *Updhatus*, *Artava Kshaya*

↓

Rajonivritti

Modern Pathophysiology

Significant fall in Sr.estradiol 50-300pg/ml to 10-20pg/ml.

↓

Depletion of ovarian follicles & follicles become resistant to pituitary gonadotropins.

↓

Negative feedback effect on HP axis- decreases

↓

Diminished inhibin

↓

Increased FSH

↓

LH increase occurs subsequently

↓

Disturbed folliculogenisis

↓

Anovulation,oligo ovulation,premature corpus luteum or corpus luteal insufficiency.

↓

Shorter follicular phase ,shorter mean cycle length

↓

Rate of follicular depletion in late menopausal transition.

↓

Some / no follicles

↓

Estradiol optimal level 20pg/ml

↓

No endometrial growth.

↓

Absence of menstruation

Pathophysiology of Menopausal Symptoms

Hormonal Changes: During menopause, there is a decrease in estrogen levels, causing changes in physiology and hormonal regulation, particularly affecting the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis. This can lead to symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and menstrual cycle irregularity.

Oxidative stress: Lower levels of estrogen are correlated with higher levels of oxidative stress due to lower antioxidant defenses. Moussa et al. (2020) show that free radicals are scavenged by estrogen, which also increases the activity of antioxidant enzymes in the body. When the level of oxidative stress compared to the antioxidant defences is imbalanced, it may result in cellular damage, inflammation, and enhanced vulnerability to chronic diseases.

Inflammation: A decrease in estrogen leads to greater levels of cytokines such as IL-6 and TNF-alpha, placing the patient in an inflammatory state. Such cytokines can elicit symptoms such as hot flashes and mood disorders, which can greatly affect the quality of life of menopausal women.

Doshaja Lakshana

Vata Lakshana	***Pittaja Lakshana***	***Kaphaja Lakshana***
Balakshaya	*Daha*	*Hrid dravatva*
Sandhivedana	*Trisha*	*Twak rukshata*
Katishula	*Mutradaha*	*Bhrama*
Adhmana	*Ushnaanubhuti*	
Atopa	*Swedahikyata*	
Vibandha	*Glani*	
Anidra		
Yonivedana		
Sirah shula		
Hasta pada supti		
Hrida sandanaadhikya		

Understanding *Rasayana*

'*Rasayana*' has been derived from '*Rasa*' that refers to taste/essence and '*Ayana*' referring to path/course. Together *Rasayana* is about the path of essence and it pertains to the nourishment and revitalization of the body and spirit. It is beneficial to pacify *Vata dosha* and increase the *Ojas* for overall health and strength. According to the classic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Rasayana* proves beneficial in improving memory, extends life span and safeguards from diseases.

Rasayana consists of herbs, regulations regarding diet, change in life style, spiritual practices, all of which are suggested for the correction of the imbalances in the body, revitalizing or strengthening the energy, bolstering the immune system and reverse the aging process. It's individualized to the person's needs, to their current health, *Prakriti*, and *Vikriti*. Drugs such as *Amalaki (Phyllanthus emblica), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera),* and *Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia)* are frequently highlighted for their adaptogenic and rejuvenating properties.

Rasayana* in *Rajonivruthi

Before one opts for any treatment, the doctor has to analyze the patient with respect to *Dosha*, *Dushya* (the *Dhatu* and *Mala* involved), *Desha*, *Bala, Kala, Anala, Prakriti, Vayas, Satva, Satmya, Ahara*, and *Avastha* and then choose the direction of course of treatment.

Due to the properties of *Rasayana*, it is very beneficial in controlling menopausal disorders

For example:

1. Herbal Remedies: *Rasayana* uses herbs that are particularly renowned for their revitalizing ability. Some of the most preferred ones are *Ashwagandha, Shatavari* and *Brahmi*. As herbs, these ingredients have a synergistic effect: *Ashwagandha* lowers stress levels and enhances sleep, *Shatavari* maintains hormones, while *Brahmi* improves mood and cognitive functions.
2. Nutrition Formulation: The *Rasayana* diet consists of wholesome, unprocessed, and nutrient rich food which are simple to digest. This entails lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats. Adopting a pro-healthy diet also aids in healthy weight maintenance and reduction of inflammation which augments overall wellness.
3. Changing lifestyles: Things like yoga and meditation help. Stress is reduced with the help of meditation while yoga helps in maintaining flexibility and

strength. Both of these activities facilitate improvement in life quality and emotional balance.

4. Detoxification: In *Rasayana*, *Panchakarma* is set for periodic schedules to cleanse the body of undigested matter (*Ama*). There may be improvement in digestion, energy level and menopausal symptoms following the procedure.
5. Emotional and Spiritual Well-being: The greater focus in *Rasayana* rests on emotional well-being and spiritual practices. Indulging in activities that bring happiness, expressing gratitude, and spending time outdoors can strengthen the mind and mitigate stress during the menopausal period.

Based on some of the symptoms

Symptoms	Drugs
Hot flashes	*Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus): Shatavari* is known for its phytoestrogenic properties that mimic estrogen activity, thus alleviating vasomotor symptoms.
Anxiety and mood swings	*Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera): Ashwagandha* acts as an adaptogen, reducing cortisol levels and promoting a balanced mood by modulating neurotransmitter activity.
Bone density loss	*Guggulu (Commiphora mukul): Guggulu* enhances osteoblastic activity, thereby promoting bone health and reducing the risk of osteoporosis, which is prevalent post-menopause.
Dryness (skin and vaginal)	*Amalaki (Phyllanthus emblica):* Rich in Vitamin C and antioxidants, *Amalaki* supports skin hydration and health, enhancing moisture levels in tissues.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana therapies hold promise as an effective approach to managing menopausal syndrome by targeting the underlying oxidative stress and inflammatory mechanisms, these therapies may provide a more holistic alternative to conventional treatments. Additionally, the adaptability of these formulations, catering to individual *Dosha* imbalances, underscores the personalized nature of Ayurvedic medicine.

Oxidative Stress and Menopause

During menopause the decline in estrogen levels correlates with increased oxidative stress due to diminished antioxidant defenses. Estrogen is known to have antioxidant properties, scavenging free radicals and enhancing the body's antioxidant enzyme activity. The reduction of estrogen leads to an imbalance between oxidative stress and antioxidant capabilities, resulting in cellular damage, inflammation, and an increased susceptibility to chronic diseases[7].

Inflammatory Pathways in Menopause

Inflammation is a crucial factor in menopausal symptoms. The decline in estrogen contributes to an inflammatory state characterized by elevated levels of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as IL-6 and TNF-alpha. These cytokines can induce symptoms like hot flashes and mood disorders, significantly impacting the quality of life for menopausal women. Studies have demonstrated that *Rasayana* therapies can modify these inflammatory responses by downregulating cytokine production and enhancing the expression of anti-inflammatory mediators[8].

Molecular Mechanisms of *Rasayana*

At the molecular level, *Rasayana* formulations exert their effects through various mechanisms. Key active compounds such as polyphenols in *Amalaki* and alkaloids in *Ashwagandha* have been shown to modulate oxidative stress and inflammation through several pathways:

NF-kB Pathway: *Rasayana* compounds inhibit the NF-kB signaling pathway, which plays a vital role in regulating inflammatory responses. Inhibition of NF-kB reduces the expression of pro-inflammatory genes, thus ameliorating inflammation during the menopausal transition.

Nrf2 Activation: *Rasayana* herbs activate the Nrf2 pathway, enhancing the body's antioxidant defense mechanisms. Nrf2 activation upregulates the expression of antioxidant enzymes like HO-1 and SOD, helping to counteract oxidative stress.

Estrogen Receptor Modulation: Some *Rasayana* constituents can mimic estrogenic activity, providing a potential alternative to hormone replacement therapies. By binding to estrogen receptors, these compounds may alleviate menopausal symptoms and promote bone health[9,10].

CONCLUSION

Rasayana offers a holistic and individualized approach to management of menopausal symptoms, stressing the interrelatedness of body, mind, and spirit. In augmenting overall well-being and rejuvenation, it offers a natural supplement to conventional therapy. However, women must seek experienced Ayurvedic practitioners in order to design a *Rasayana* program individualized to their needs and condition. This ancient tradition can smooth menopause transition to a new phase of energy and well-being.

In summary, the merging of traditional Ayurvedic *Rasayana* philosophy and modern scientific insight offers a new promise for managing menopausal syndrome effectively. Through the augmentation of

antioxidant defense, regulation of inflammatory responses, and identification of alternative estrogenic activities, *Rasayana* treatments offer an intriguing alternative in preventing the challenges brought about by menopause. Future and continued studies will play a crucial role in validating these observations and bringing *Rasayana* to mainstream women's health therapy.

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